

'SPOOKS' MAKE LIFE MISERABLE FOR AMBASSADOR LODGE

'Arrogant' CIA Disobeys Orders in Viet Nam

By RICHARD STARNES Scripps-Howard Staff Writer

SAIGON, Oct. 2.—The story of the Central Intelligence Agency's role in South Viet Nam is a dismal chronicle of bureaucratic arrogance, obstinate disregard of orders, and unrestrained thirst for power.

Twice the CIA flatly refused to carry out instructions from Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, according to a high United States source here.

In one of these instances the CIA frustrated a plan of action Mr. Lodge brought with him from Washington, because the agency disagreed with it.

This led to a dramatic confrontation between Mr. Lodge and John Richardson, chief of the huge CIA apparatus here. Mr. Lodge failed to move Mr. Richardson, and the dispute was bucked back to Washington. Secretary of State Dean Rusk and CIA Chief John A. McCone were unable to resolve the conflict, and the matter is now reported to be awaiting settlement by President Kennedy.

It is one of the developments expected to be covered in Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's report to Mr. Kennedy.

Others Critical, Too

Other American agencies here are incredibly bitter about the CIA.

"If the United States ever experiences a 'Seven Days in May' it will come from the CIA, and not the Pentagon," one U. S. official commented caustically.

"Seven Days in May" is a fictional account of an attempted military coup to take over the U. S. Government.

CIA "spooks" (a universal term for secret agents here) have penetrated every branch of the American community in Saigon, until non-spoof Americans here almost seem to be suffering a CIA psychosis.

An American field officer with a distinguished combat career speaks angrily about "that man at headquarters in Saigon wearing a colonel's uniform." He means the man is a CIA agent, and he can't understand

stand what he is doing at U. S. military headquarters here, unless it is spying on other Americans.

Another American officer, talking about the CIA, acidly commented: "You'd think they'd have learned something from Cuba but apparently they didn't."

Few Know CIA Strength

Few people other than Mr. Richardson and his close aides know the actual CIA strength here, but a widely used figure is 600. Many are clandestine agents known only to a few of their fellow spooks.

Even Mr. Richardson is a man about whom it is difficult to learn much in Saigon. He is said to be a former OSS officer, and to have served with distinction in the CIA in the Philippines.

A surprising number of the spooks are known to be involved in their ghostly trade and some make no secret of it.

"There are spooks in the U. S. Information Service, in the U. S. Operations mission, in every aspect of American official and commercial life here," one official—presumably a non-spoof—said.

"They represent a tremendous power and total unaccountability to anyone," he added.

Coupled with the ubiquitous secret police of Ngo Dinh Nhu, a surfeit of spooks has given Saigon an oppressive police state atmosphere.

The Nhu-Richardson relationship is a subject of lively speculation. The CIA continues to pay the special forces which conducted brutal raids on Buddhist temples last Aug. 21, altho in fairness it should be pointed out that the CIA is paying these goons for the war against communist guerrillas, not Buddhist bonzes (priests).

Hands Over Millions

Nevertheless, on the first of every month, the CIA dutifully hands over a quarter million American dollars to pay these special forces.

Whatever else it buys, it doesn't buy any solid information on what the special forces are up to. The

Aug. 21 raids caught top U. S. officials here and in Washington flat-footed.

Nhu ordered the special forces to crush the Buddhist priests, but the CIA wasn't let in on the secret. (Some CIA button men now say they warned their superiors what was coming up, but in any event the warning of harsh repression was never passed to top officials here or in Washington.)

Consequently, Washington reacted unsurely to the crisis. Top officials here and at home were outraged at the news the CIA was paying the temple raiders, but the CIA continued the payments.

It may not be a direct subsidy for a religious war against the country's Buddhist majority, but it comes close to that.

And for every State Department aide here who will tell you, "Dammit, the CIA is supposed to gather information, not make policy, but policy-making is what they're doing here," there are military officers who scream over the way the spooks dabble in military operations.

A Typical Example

For example, highly trained trail watchers are an important part of the effort to end Viet Cong infiltration from across the Laos and Cambodia borders. But if the trail watchers spot incoming Viet Congs, they report it to the CIA in Saigon, and in the fullness of time, the spooks may tell the military.

One very high American official here, a man who has spent much of his life in the service of democracy, likened the CIA's growth to a malignancy, and added he was not sure even the White House could control it any longer.

Unquestionably Mr. McNamara and Gen. Maxwell Taylor both got an earful from people who are beginning to fear the CIA is becoming a Third Force, co-equal with President Diem's regime and the U. S. Government—and answerable to neither.

There is naturally the highest interest here as to whether Mr. McNamara will persuade Mr. Kennedy something ought to be done about it.

(See editorial on Page 32.)

*Intell Act.
V.M. Phe*

What's Wrong in South Viet Nam?

IT is a brutally messed up state of affairs that our man, Richard Starnes, reports from South Viet Nam in his article on Page 3 today.

And the mess he has found isn't Viet Namese. It is American, involving bitter strife among U. S. agencies—which may help explain the vast cost and lack of satisfactory progress in this operation to contain communist aggression.

The whole situation, as described by Mr. Starnes, must be shocking to Americans who believe we are engaged in a selfless crusade to protect democracy in this far-off land.

He has been told that:

- The U. S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has flatly refused to carry out instructions from Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, frustrating a plan of action he took from Washington.

- Secret agents, or "spooks," from CIA "have penetrated every branch of the American community in Saigon."

Who are we fighting there anyhow? The communists, or our own people?

- The CIA agents represent a tremendous power and are totally unaccountable to anyone. They dabble and interfere in military operations, to the frustration of our military officials.

The bitterness of other American agencies in Saigon toward the CIA, Starnes found, is "almost unbelievable."

On the basis of this last statement alone, there is something terribly wrong with our system out there.

Defense Secretary McNamara just has finished his investigation on the ground in Viet Nam and is preparing to report to the President. Mr. McNamara is a tough man of decisive action. It may be assumed he now is in a position to assess the blame for this quarreling and back-biting inside the American family—whether it falls on the CIA or other agencies which accuse the CIA.

One way or the other, some official heads should roll.